



NASW

National Association of Social Workers / Connecticut Chapter

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**HB 5653: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION TO PROVIDE
FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY GUN VIOLENCE AND INTERVENTION PROGRAM GRANTS.**

Finance, Revenue and Bonding

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The National Association of Social Workers, CT Chapter supports HB 5653 that creates an excise tax on purchase of ammunition by a business for sale at retail. This bill addresses the need for funding for gun violence prevention and reduction initiatives.

Gun violence is a public health crisis both in the State of Connecticut and nationally. While it would be best for our federal government to proactively make reduction of gun violence a major public health campaign, the sad reality is that we cannot expect such actions at the federal level. This leaves the states to find ways to fund a critically important issue of staving off the tide of gun violence and developing preventative measures.

A user fee is not an uncommon practice for other products that have a potential of harmful effects to others. Excise taxes on tobacco, alcohol and gas are prime examples where the state raises funds to defray the costs associated with product usage. This bill takes this same approach.

One of our goals in Connecticut needs to be to initiate, maintain, and expand programs that reduce gun violence by changing individual behaviors and cultural norms that increase the risk of gun injuries and fatalities. Targeted public health and educational campaigns, developed with the advice of the Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention can achieve such success if given a funding stream to produce the desired results.

As social workers, we see the harm to individuals, families and communities that have been impacted by gun violence. The trauma of being a victim of gun violence and the anxiety of residents who live in communities faced with gun violence has profound effects that can last a lifetime. The societal costs of dealing with post-violence is costly in the health and finances of a community. HB 5653 provides a funding stream to begin to pay for those costs and to work toward alleviating causes of gun violence.